

Washington, DC -- Working to promote public safety, ensure communities have the resources necessary to fight crime, and to give local law enforcement the best tools possible, Congresswoman Linda Sánchez (CA-39) has secured a commitment to fund a major technology modernization of the Lakewood Sheriff Station. Sánchez got the project included in the Commerce, Justice, State Fiscal Year 2004 Appropriations bill, which passed the House Appropriations Committee this week, and is expected to be passed by the U.S. House of Representatives shortly.

Earlier this year, Sánchez made it a priority to meet with the Mayors and officials from every city in the district to discuss their top priorities and projects. At the Lakewood meeting, Mayor Larry Van Nostran, the city manager, and other city officials told Sánchez they would like her help with their number one project – the Lakewood Sheriff station. The City has a major modernization and expansion planned for the station. However, they are in need of federal funding for the technology portion of the renovation.

“The main Lakewood Sheriff station was built in 1958 and now serves five cities totaling 240,000 people - a 25% increase over the population it served in 1958. The station has some real limitations, both in terms of space and technology. Especially given how many people and cities are served by the Lakewood Station, I want to work with the local community to bring state-of-the-art computers and crime-fighting technology to the Lakewood Station,” said Congresswoman Sánchez.

In addition to serving the City of Lakewood, the station provides key support for sheriff's operations in four other local cities: Artesia, Bellflower, Hawaiian Gardens, and Paramount.

Following her meeting with the city, Sánchez met with officials at the Lakewood Station and toured the facilities. She then immediately went to work to secure federal funding for this project.

“It is critical that we provide our police and sheriff personnel with the most modern equipment to improve their ability to protect our communities and fight crime,” said Sánchez.

The funding commitment Sánchez has secured will help the station:

- Install high-tech "voice-over" lines that allow telephone usage on computer lines. This will greatly reduce the cost of phone calls, which will free up budget funds over time and allow for hiring more deputies and utilizing other crime-fighting resources. It also immediately increases office efficiency and crime-fighting efforts as Sheriff's personnel can keep their same phone extension at whatever computer they are working at, meaning Sheriff's personnel stay in touch with each other and the public more quickly. The Lakewood Sheriff Station would be the first in our region to have these high-tech voice-over lines.

- Higher capacity data lines will also be installed. This will allow the Lakewood Station to upgrade its existing computerized photo-matching system, which has allowed the Lakewood Station to be a leader in catching career criminals by using computers to enhance often-grainy video photos of store robberies and other crime scenes with mug shots of career criminals.

- As an example of technology problems, in the current basement emergency operations center, there is no antenna wiring to allow cell phone calls to come in or out. Cell phones are often the only phones that work after disasters.

- Every Sheriff Station employee will get state-of-the-art, high-speed computers that will allow them to make maximum use of new crime-fighting computer technology that continues to be introduced every year, including the photo-matching system mentioned above, which currently can't be used on most computers at the Lakewood Station.

Sánchez will continue working to secure as much funding as possible for the station. The modernization is well under way. Preliminary design and floor plans are already completed, the detailed design work is scheduled to start later this year, and the construction is expected to start in Fall 2004.